



Seeing the Multitudes

The Metropolitan Mission Fields of the United States

By Bob Larson

I have found that metropolitan church planters do not seem to be focused on sin, crime, violence, and expense issues associated with reaching a city for Jesus. Rather, they seem to focus more on the multitudes of people from many cultures who need to be reached in a large city. Ask any one of them why they went to a major metro area in America to plant a church and they will immediately tell you it was because they had an opportunity to reach a vast cross section of humanity.

Presently, in the United States we have a population of 328 million people (July 2017 estimate). We are growing at a rate of 2.8 million people per year. There are now 273 metropolitan cities across America. These large, sprawling urban areas are home to 82% of our nation's population. This means the majority of America's unchurched and unreached live in our large cities. To effectively reach the metro multitudes, it will take thousands of new church plants and thousands of God-called metro church planters with a vision to reach the untapped metropolitan mission fields of the United States. It will also take a major

investment by the churches in our movement to assist men who are willing to start and pastor churches in metro America. I realize all church planters are not called to the city, but I am convinced that we must prayerfully pursue this unique and constantly expanding mission field.

Motivation for Reaching the Multitudes

In Acts 17, Paul, on his second missionary journey, arrives in Athens. He is struck spiritually by this city that is *wholly given to idolatry*. Satan is using massive amounts of idolatry to blind the eyes and minds of the citizens of Athens to the Gospel. As I travel through our major cities and observe the great spiritual needs there, I wonder who will reach those who have been blinded by Satan on the metro mission fields of the United States? Who will pray for the prosperous who live in the suburbs of these overcrowded cities? Who will surrender to preach the Gospel and start a New Testament Baptist church? I wonder who is willing to reach the many ethnic groups who come to America for a better life and migrate to the metro mission fields? Who will love the multitudes in the inner cities and be

willing to go to reach the lost on this overlooked mission field?

When we observe the present spiritual condition and populations of our major cities, it ought to motivate us to do all we can to see thousands of new churches started that will reach the metro multitudes. Metropolitan cities in the Sun Belt now set the pace for the fastest rate of growth nationwide. Atlanta, Charlotte, and Orlando top the list for rapid rate of population growth in the Southeast, and yet, today less than 30 percent in this region go to any type of church. Meanwhile, the Northeast still has the greatest concentration of population in the country and the least number of independent Baptist churches. Think of the impact the Gospel could have on this entire nation if we could plant hundreds of new churches in the Northeast corridor. Political and economic decisions made there daily affect our entire nation.

Major metro cities like Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston should be targeted for hundreds of new church plants. An exciting side benefit to planting churches in the Northeast is the opportunity to reach many English-speaking ethnic groups as well as "main stream" Americans.

In the upper Midwest, the cities of Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee have a combined population of over 18 million people. Many Midwest cities have been overlooked by independent Baptist church planters. In the Pacific Northwest, the city of Seattle offers an opportunity to reach over three million people. Meanwhile in the Southwest United States, 18 million people now live in the metro Los Angeles area and over four million people live in the Phoenix Valley in Arizona. May God give us the compassion of our Lord Jesus for the multitudes on the metro mission fields of the United States! *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd* (Matthew 9:36).

Mobilization to Reach the Multitudes

In Acts 11, when the church at Jerusalem received word that there was a great need to minister to the many who had been saved at Antioch, the Jerusalem church mobilized to meet the need. *Then tidings of these things*



came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch (Acts 11:22). To reach the metro mission fields of America, we need motivation as well as a massive mobilization effort to reach our cities. Where do we start?

First, church planting to reach the metro cities of America must be emphasized on the local church level. If we are ever going to send out the needed number of church planters required to reach the multitudes on the United States metro mission field, we must challenge our men and young men concerning this need and then expose them to metro church planting. A great way to do this is to invite one or two United States metro church planters to your next missions conference. Allow them to share their burdens for their cities and the challenges they face or will be facing. Encourage them to tell how God provided for their church planting ministries and their families as they stepped out and obeyed God to go to the multitudes. Have them testify of the lives that have been changed through their church planting ministry as they preached the Gospel.

Second, challenge your church by printing a list of the 200 largest cities in America (citymayors.com/gratis/uscities_100.html) and making it a prayer list for your church members to pray over. Encourage them to ask the Living God to raise up church planters for the metro mission fields in the United States. Make the United States metro mission field a place to pray for during your mid-week prayer meetings. After praying for these cities, plan a United States metro missions trip where a cross section of your church can see and experience what ministry is like in a major city in America. As you go, plan to assist the church

planter with literature distribution or perhaps a small construction project. Schedule the trip to allow time for your people to be in the services to meet the people who attend a new church plant. Perhaps you could help the new metro church plant by taking your Vacation Bible School (VBS) on the road and using your people to conduct a VBS for the new church.

Third, churches will do well to support USA church planters, especially those who have answered the call to go to the metro mission fields of the United States. Supporting a family who is willing to go to a large city to start a church will always require a longer commitment from supporting churches. Be prepared to make that commitment. Living in a metro American city is expensive. The high cost of renting a suitable meeting place to conduct ministry will be a major expense. I will be glad to assist your church in implementing any of the above ideas. I also have several Sundays available in 2018 where I would be happy to come to your church and take an entire Sunday to focus on the metropolitan mission fields in the United States.

Finally, God may be calling YOU to plant a church on the United States metro mission field. If so, contact me at BIMI Reseeding America Ministry. The Reseeding America Ministry stands ready to help you, your pastor, and send church plant a new church on the metro mission field in the United States. We can increase our missionary force worldwide by increasing our missionary source. Our missionary source has always been New Testament Baptist churches. May God give us thousands of new churches on the United States metro mission field! [W](#)

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